

ARLINGTON PARK & RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING MINTUES

Approved

April 23, 2024

The Town of Arlington Park and Recreation Commission came to order in the main meeting room at the Community Center on Tuesday, April 23, 2024, at 7:05pm.

Commission Members: Scott Walker, Phil Lasker, Jen Rothenberg, Leslie Mayer, Shirley Canniff, Sarah Carrier and Josh Fenollosa. Recreation Director Joe Connelly was also present.

Anticipated Speakers: Ian Ramey and Emily Hunt – Copley Wolff, Josh Millonig – Weston & Sampson

Members of the Public: Sue Doctrow, Elisabeth Carr-Jones, Elaine Crowder, Jean Rosenberg, Asia Kepka, Brian McBride, Rajon Ramchandani, Liz Reisberg

Preliminary Matter: Scott Walker, Park & Recreation Commission Chair, took formal attendance and welcomed anticipated speakers and members of the public to the Recreation Commission meeting.

Parallel Park Design Final Review – Copley Wolff

Ian Ramey, Copley Wolff – Attended two public input meetings and weekly design team meetings. He also shared that there was an excellent public turn out at Town Day and online meetings.

Emily Hunt – Narrated the presentation of the preferred concept. She also stated that the design is available online on the Arlington town website. The final design includes minor changes from the preferred concept after receiving community feedback. Copley Wolff took into consideration requests to keep several elements that were important and well-loved by the neighborhood users. The design includes a picnic area, age-appropriate play areas for ages 2-5 and 5-12, a fenced dog area, basketball court and a bike loop. Ms. Hunt also noted that the design preserves existing trees and that the amenities will match those in other Arlington parks. Following a fence audit the following was also recommended – a 10' fence between the dog area and basketball court, a new fence around the dog area (corner of Medford Street and Mystic Valley Parkway) and a new fence around the play area. The total bid came in at \$685K.

Mr. Connelly – Budget is \$600K. Representative Sean Garballey has submitted a \$150K request for state funding.

The Commission discussed the following –

- Location of the separate double entrance near the dog area and basketball court in relation to the installation of the bike racks and ease of access.
- Prioritization of bid/alts
 - Dog Area Upgrades
 - Perimeter Fencing
 - Full Color Sealcoat (basketball court) – Mr. Lasker noted that the cost estimate was high.
 - Site Amenities including youth hoop, additional plantings
 - Water Fountain
- Water fountains. Mr. Connelly – Fountains will not be added at this time. Existing fountains at other Town locations are part of a pilot program.
- Preservation of existing trees. Trees/planters to be installed inside dog area to replace dying trees (confirmed by tree warden).
- PIP and engineered wood fiber combination surfacing was determined to be more cost-effective.
- ADA accessibility – pathways, entrances, picnic area surface, and dog area path. Ms. Mayer – There have been accessibility issues at Thorndike Dog Park where wheelchairs have gotten stuck. Ms. Rothenberg – Picnic area surfacing needs to be fully accessible. Copley Wolff stated that the picnic area would be concrete.

- Swing elements for each play zone (2-5 yo, 5-12 yo).

Mr. Connelly – The dog area is not a designated dog park but will be used for off-leash activities.

Ms. Canniff – Concern about the sturdiness of the T-bar style toddler swings and potential inappropriate and destructive use by older children. Copley Wolff – Very sturdy design that is both space and cost effective.

Ms. Carrier – Noted the positioning of the bike racks in relation to the double gated entrance near the dog area and basketball court. She also pointed out that the path inside the dog park does not appear to be straight. Copley Wolff will review.

Mr. Walker – With increased use will come more bikes. Suggested two separate gates to prevent congestion with bikes and dogs in the double gated entrance. Mr. Connelly – Bike racks will be purchased but not installed immediately. There is time to discuss placement.

Ms. Mayer – Noted the positives of having water/hose access in dog area, trash receptacle placement to ensure DPW pickups.

Ms. Mayer motioned to accept the design along with the modifications discussed, accept the add/alt prioritization determined by the Commission with the condition that more discussion and changes may be made if additional funding is secured. Seconded by Mr. Lasker. Approved 5-0.

Hills Hill Mountain Biking Area Design Review – Weston & Sampson

Josh Millonig of Weston & Sampson presented the preferred design plan.

- Site review of all trees conducted and identified on the design.
- Existing trail networks will require some maintenance. Make-shift jumps will be removed.
- Open meadow area – no changes.
- Create a youth track (toddler scooters etc) on the existing concrete area between Buck and the soccer field. Mr. Connelly – Pending budget.
- Main track to be located closer to Summer Street. Mr. Fenollosa – Less noise impact being near a busy street.
- Three element/activities along the track. There will be no seating along the track to prevent “hang-out areas” in the woods. Tracks will be 4-6’ wide and will work within the existing trees.
- An informal seating area between the track and meadow area is possible. Mr. Connelly – Has been discussed by the design team as it will create a natural barrier between the paths and the meadow.

Mr. Connelly – Received multiple correspondence requesting signage designating existing paths for walking only and separate paths for bike use. All trails in Arlington are “multi-use”. The Commission will review concerns as needed but no action will be taken at this time.

Ms. Rothenberg – Reminded the attendees that, per open meeting by-laws, meetings can not be recorded without a formal request approved and signed prior to the meeting.

Mr. Lasker – Feedback from the Town’s youth community is positive and exciting. Commended Henry Fenollosa for helping to bring his 2019 project presentation to life in a way that preserves existing features and elements.

Ms. Mayer – Agreed with Mr. Lasker, noting that the space will provide a sense of community for kids/bikers and a comfortable gathering place for those with similar interests.

Ms. Rothenberg – Project allows for the perfect use of the existing, limited terrain. The project itself has already created a sense of community for all ages during clean-up activities and community input/planning discussions.

Ms. Canniff – Expressed gratitude for a population that was so deeply affected by Covid isolation and indoor activity limitations.

Mr. Walker – Thanked the public, the working group, Mr. McBride and Henry Fenollosa for their assistance in bringing the project together. Commended everyone for honoring the property deed to the youth of Arlington.

Mr. McBride – Supports the pump track location with the compromise of leaving the existing trees. Requested a central spine walkway to provide a safe walking space. Mr. Connelly – Walking path is not a design element but can be discussed in the future.

Mr. Lasker motioned to approve the design as presented, seconded by Ms. Canniff. Approved 5-0.

Asis Kepka – Inquired about access roads. Mr. Connelly – Necessary for construction and maintenance access.

Sure Doctrow, CPAC member – Speaking on behalf of herself congratulated the team and noted that she has always supported the project. She inquired if the pump track was to be paved and the CPAC approval conditions regarding the pump track location in the woods. Mr. Connelly – CPAC condition was that the Commission needed to present two design options if the pump track was going to be located in the woods. Ms. Doctrow stated that there will be a special CPA meeting to discuss the pump track.

Mr. Connelly – Parking and traffic issues will be addressed by TAC as they develop.

Rajon Ramchandani – Requested that the Commission consider removing bike access to the trail along Summer/Washington Street to reduce noise near the abutters. Mr. Connelly – Make-shift jumps are being removed. The path is an existing path and will not be removed.

Ms. Crowder – Noted that a newer path was created last winter and inquired about it being removed. Mr. Connelly will look at the path with the contractor.

Bench Donation Request – Spy Pond Park, Inna Bezborodnikova

The Commission discussed the plaque dedication wording and location requests. It was determined that the bench will be installed at a Spy Pond location.

Comments and Items for Future Meetings

- **Capital Plan Review** – May meeting
- **Menotomy Park Design Review** – End of May after survey work.
- **Mini-Pitch Working Group Update** - Working group meeting Monday will include representatives from basketball groups, soccer groups and the general public along with Mr. Lasker and Mr. Walker.

Ms. Canniff requested to add a discussion to address a better method to dispose of dog waste. There has been an increasing problem with smell, improper disposal, trash overflow and rats.

Approval of Minutes – Ms. Rothenberg motioned to approve the minutes from April 9, 2024, as amended, seconded by Ms. Mayer. Approved 4-0.

Correspondence Received

Mr. Connelly forwarded correspondence he has received to the Commission regarding Hills Hill.

New Business

- **Artificial Turf Committee Update** Mr. Connelly - Final report has been completed and Natasha Wadyn is working on the Town Meeting presentation. Mr. Lasker – EPA joint study with CPC and CPSC has declared crumb rubber to be safe. Mr. Connelly noted that approval from higher agencies will be very valuable.
- **Open Space Committee** Ms. Canniff – Committee is very active with Ecofest. No additional updates.

Public Comment

Liz Reisberg A– Testing at Hills Pond – algae bloom due to phosphates. Would like to discuss educational opportunities to share with abutters about the use of fertilizers that are contributing to the algae bloom. Ms. Mayer – In the past this issue was brought up with Vision 20/20. Mr. Connelly will reach out to the aquatics management group. Ms. Canniff recommended sending out an email blast to the FOMRP members and neighbors.

Ms. Rothenberg – Inquired about removing the Save Hills Hill committee signs. Mr. Connelly – Can only remove signs on public property.

Ms. Canniff – Noted the increase in Bark for Life signs around town. Ms. Rothenberg noticed that the signs advertise “vendors”. Mr. Connelly will check in with the group to remind them that for-profit vendors cannot sell on town property. Ms. Mayer reminded the group that sales in support of a 501(c)3 is permitted.

Ms. Rothenberg motioned to adjourn at 9:20pm, seconded by Ms. Canniff. Approved 5-0.

The Arlington Park & Recreation Commission Meeting Minutes were respectfully submitted by Deanna Stacchi.